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ABSTRACT

The value of attending college is discussed in this the first of four transcripts of radio programs on college today. This transcript includes dialogue on the following subjects: a college graduate's job as a bartender; the economics of a college education; students' descriptions of required courses; educational theories of a college president; the political atmosphere of college campuses; curriculum changes at Amherst; the core curriculum; a defense of liberal arts tradition; the universality of the human experience in education; the purpose and value of a college education; and a freshman's perspective of college. (SPG)

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Program No. 119: "COLLEGES TODAY"
PART I
May 8, 1978

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COLLEGES TODAY: PART I

CHILD: A...

CHILD: B...

CHILD: C...

MAN: D...

WOMAN: H...

MAN: I...

MAN: J...

CHILD: K...

MAN: L...

TEENAGER: M...

WOMAN: N...

WOMAN: O...

WOMAN: P...

MERROW: T-I-O-N-S -- options, OPTIONS IN EDUCATION. From the ABC's of pre-school to the alphabet soup of government programs, this is OPTIONS IN EDUCATION.

* * *

REINHARDT: What was your major?

STUDENT: Social work.

REINHARDT: And you now work at a bar?

STUDENT: Yep.

REINHARDT: What happened?

STUDENT: I didn't have enough experience, that kind of thing. The field seems to be crowded with people who have Master's degrees, and they're taking jobs that are -- that they're over-qualified for. So we're stuck.

STUDENT: You know, back in the '60s, everybody wanted to join the Peace Corps. It's just not -- it's a changing world, and jobs are more important I think to students nowadays. They're actually thinking about going out and trying to find the best job you can to make a decent living, because, I don't know, it just seems to be a harsher world. I don't know.

FRANK NEWMAN: Our job is not to guarantee you a job because you came

to our university. Our job is to guarantee you an education. Your job is to go out with that education and find yourself a job. Now you may say that's a cop-out. I say it's an irrational thing on our part to ever guarantee you that we're going to worry about you getting a job.

REINHARDT: You'll hear statements like those on every college campus in the United States...

MERROW: Because students everywhere are worried about jobs, jobs, jobs.

REINHARDT: I'm Barbara Reinhardt. And like those students, I grew up hearing "Go to college if you want to get a good job."

MERROW: So did I. I'm John Merrow. And I remember the expression, "A college degree is the key."

REINHARDT: Those slogans implied that everyone who went to college was entitled to a prestigious, high-paying job.

MERROW: Well, for a long while, that was pretty nearly true. A college education did lead to a good job.

REINHARDT: Any way, the equation "College equals Job" took hold....

MERROW: ...And now we've got trouble.

REINHARDT: Why? Well, because there aren't as many of those good jobs these days, nowhere nearly enough to give one to each college graduate.

MERROW: And that horrifying prospect of college followed by a lousy job, or even by joblessness, is having a profound impact on college students everywhere....

REINHARDT: And on high school seniors, who are asking themselves whether it's really worth going to college after all.

MERROW: On campus, the undergraduates are enrolling in work oriented courses. "What use is Shakespeare in the competition for jobs?"

REINHARDT: And colleges needing students are under pressure to offer more vocationally oriented courses. Shakespeare doesn't sell as well as pre-law or accounting.

MERROW: But the traditionalists are fighting back under the banner of the liberal arts.

REINHARDT: And that's the battle we're reporting on this week on OPTIONS IN EDUCATION.

COLLEGE GRADUATE DESCRIBES JOB AS BARTENDER

REINHARDT: How about you? What are you doing out here today?

STUDENT: Just sittin', watching, getting a little sun.

REINHARDT: Are finals coming up? Are you a student now?

STUDENT: No, I graduated last August.

REINHARDT: Do you work here at the college?

STUDENT: No, I work in Chambersburg in a bar. Assistant Manager.

REINHARDT: They say that courses at Shippensburg are really very much career oriented. What was your major?

STUDENT: Social work.

REINHARDT: And you now work at a bar?

STUDENT: Yep. A little social activity.

REINHARDT: Did you expect not to find work in social work, or what happened?

STUDENT: Well, I expected to, but it came up to a couple of roadblocks, and, you know, I didn't have enough experience, that kind of thing. The field seems to be crowded with people who have Master's degrees, and they're taking jobs that they're over-qualified for. So we're stuck.

THE ECONOMICS OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION

REINHARDT: Let's begin with economics. It costs a lot to go to college, sometimes more than $20,000 for four years in tuition, room and board.

MERROW: There are other costs as well, one of which is easy to overlook. That's the money you don't make because you're going to college and not working full-time.

REINHARDT: Let's consider college as an investment. Is it worth it? Richard Freeman, an economist at Harvard, is known for his work on the value of college-going.

MERROW: When I talked to Richard Freeman, I asked him if college was worth it in economic terms alone?

FREEMAN: It probably -- even for the people in the future, it probably won't be as economically worthwhile as it was in the past when going to college really guaranteed, literally guaranteed you, you know, a good job at high pay.

MERROW: You're one of the people who is identified with creating this equation, "College equals job." Do you object to being characterized that way?

FREEMAN: No, basically because I'm just, in some guise, representing what, in fact, most of the people who consider going to college are thinking about. Almost every study that's asked, say, freshman or prospective freshman, "What are the main or important things about going to college?," will find that the students respond "Getting a good job." Getting higher pay than

they otherwise would have gotten is one of the main factors. It's not the only factor, but ordinarily people do say that it is one of the main factors.

MERROW: I guess what I'm trying to figure out is whether people making decisions about going to college actually use this kind of information. I can imagine maybe a junior who wants to drop out using your information to buttress his decision to drop out of school. But I can't imagine a high school kid saying "Hmmm, I think I'll go," or his parents saying "I don't think it's worth investing the money in you, kid, because, after all, you won't get it back."

FREEMAN: Well, I don't -- it doesn't operate that explicitly, but it doesn't mean that economic factors don't operate. They may operate more implicitly.

So you are seeing the kids switch among the fields very definitely. And there's no question that these switches are due to the fact that they are looking at the job market and they are deciding, "Should I go?" And actually teachers are a very good case, because a lot of kids may be in the process of sitting and saying, "Shall I go to teacher's college? That's really the only college I'm thinking about." And where you would go in the '60s thinking you'd get a good job as a teacher, now the kid might say -- the girl, "Maybe I should go to nursing school instead rather than to the teacher's college, because the jobs for teachers don't look very good."

Stanford has a marvelous letter that they send out to the -- they sent out last spring to the people admitted to the English program. And there was a distinct warning that you may not be able to get a job as an English teacher. And if you want to go, if you want to come, come to our program; we've admitted you, but we're not -- you know, we're only warning you about the job market; we're not giving you any optimistic word. It's dreary. It looks very bad for English Ph.Ds in the future.

MERROW: What's been the reaction to you and to your studies, I mean to your raising the question of the economic value of going to college?

FREEMAN: Oh, I would say mixed. Certainly some people have really take affront. And the president of one major university, he made a speech denouncing the work and the notion that you would consider the economics of going to college. Of course when the economic rewards of going to college were very good in the '60s, not that president, but the university people were trumpeting that fact all over the country, to the Congress and everybody. So you can't have it both ways.

REINHARDT: Harvard economist Richard Freeman.

That's the pragmatic cold-hearted view of education as a means to a better job.

MERROW: He does say things are looking up for today's high school juniors and seniors. The job market is better, and the college-going group smaller.

REINHARDT: But recent college graduates will tell you a degree no longer guarantees a job.

MERROW: Yet the fact is that Americans are enrolling in colleges in record numbers, about 11,000,000 in all today.

REINHARDT: But what are they studying when they're on campus?

MERROW: Well, they're there so they can get jobs afterwards, and so they're signing up for courses that seem likely to lead in that direction.

REINHARDT: It's a wonderful irony, John. Ten years ago, students were demanding "relevant" courses. That meant black history, urban politics, Vietnamese studies. Today the cry is still relevance, but now the same word means job-related.

STUDENTS DESCRIBE THEIR REQUIRED COURSES

STUDENT: The major reason for coming to school is to get a job when they get out, not really to expand your knowledge in that sense.

REINHARDT: Do you agree with that?

STUDENT: Ah, yeah, basically. I think a lot of the students today primarily attend college simply because they would like to make themselves more marketable in the job areas, particularly from the respect of financial capabilities, in that they are more marketable, and therefore by attending college, perhaps they could earn a greater income than perhaps if they didn't attend college.

MERROW: Those two students go to Shippensburg State College in Pennsylvania. In fact, they're the current and immediate past presidents of the student body. Barbara talked to them about college and particularly about the required courses, the general ed courses that everyone at Shippensburg has to take.

STUDENT: I think that -- basically, I think that a well-rounded liberal arts education is good. However, I think from the students' standpoint, they get very frustrated at times when they have to sit in a class that is not interesting to them, they personally feel is not beneficial to them, even though it may be, but they don't perceive it as being.

I think a comment that I get from a lot of students is why can't we come here and take the courses that are required for whatever we want to do in life and leave it at that. And I think basically the administration here at the college, and particularly the faculty from talking to them and being involved, really believe in a well-rounded liberal arts education. I think the administration, the faculty, are very strong with general education, a liberal arts education. But I think that the students tend to disagree with that to some degree.

REINHARDT: Do you think the students at Shippensburg are typical of college students everywhere, that most college students prefer to take basically only the courses they need to get the job they want?

STUDENT: Very definitely. And I notice most of this is mentioned in economics. They come here hoping to get out as soon as possible and get into their careers. And so I say to them all of those general and courses, you know, fitting and -- I'm probably those who are over the semesters or just underestimated those the year orientation.

REINHARDT: My impression is that many employers these days are looking for people with broader backgrounds. They don't really want specialists. Wouldn't that make the possibilities of getting a job even slimmer?

STUDENT: That's true, very much so. But a lot of the business majors -- okay -- coming out of school do not end up with jobs in the major that they were in. They come out of school. The employer will look at them and determine if they are, in a sense, a good person, a good candidate for the position, and then they re-train them.

REINHARDT: You mean how he decided whether he's a good candidate might not involve at all what he's learned, but whether he seems to be bright and aggressive?

STUDENT: Correct. They do reflect your grades, especially coming from such a large business school where a lot of people apply for each one of the jobs and have interviews with people on campus. But when it comes down to it, just your general personality, your outlook on life, your aggressiveness, and then dealing with, you know, what courses you really are interested in. Are you so simple-minded as only to -- willing to do one thing, or are you willing to take on different types of responsibilities.

NERRIOM: Two students at Shippensburg State College in Pennsylvania talking about general education. That is, the required courses and how they can get in the way of training for a job.

COLLEGE PRESIDENT EXPLAINS HIS EDUCATIONAL THEORY

DR. SEAVERS: I believe in broad foundations in the arts and sciences, but for a student just the major in English or major in history may not have a great appeal to a large number of our students. They want to get into curriculum, because they see a position, you know, at the end of the tunnel.

REINHARDT: That's Silvano B. Seavers, the president of Shippensburg State College. Until fairly recently, that college during had teachers and little else. That is, it was a special kind of vocational school.

NERRIOM: But then, all of a sudden, there was a teacher surplus, and Shippensburg had to change or go under. Today, over one-third of its students major in business.

REINHARDT: But Dr. Seavers told me that his college had kept its commitment to general education; that is, to basic requirements in history, English, psychology, math and so forth. But it increased the number of courses that students could choose from to meet those requirements.

DR. SEAVERS: Now, I'll tell you what has happened. At some institutions

and to some extent at this institution, we have really developed many new courses under the general heading of the arts and sciences. There's been a tendency in the seventies, the nineties, some courses. We have probably developed some courses that have had appeal to students in the earlier coming through the -- out of the 1960s and 1970s which can be questioned as good, solid arts and sciences courses.

REINHARDT: Can you give me some examples?

DR. SEAVERS: Maybe I'm thinking right here at this institution of maybe a course in the film, where maybe the course in the film could be and should be a good, solid course. Maybe it is; maybe it isn't, you understand, but it's certainly not a course in Milton, for example. And I'm inclined to feel that maybe we have been somewhat guilty here. But the thing we have not been guilty of -- there's no question at some of our finest institutions in the country, students have been given very broad latitude in the selection of courses in the general ed areas. Here we have required the balance of the twelve to eighteen hours in each of the areas. And I notice a trend at the Harvards and the Stanfords -- I'm talking about name institutions now -- that they're going back to more of required courses under general education than would have been true, say, five or ten years ago.

And I'd like to feel that while maybe we have attended somewhat here, we haven't attended to the extent during this period of saying to students "Well, you may take any course you want to up to sixty hours." We have always had, in the 1950s, in the 1960s and 1970s, the requirement of half the program, or sixty hours, in general education. We have provided our students in the '70s with more choices within those broad areas.

MERRION: Gilmore H. Seavers, the president of Shippensburg State College.

POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE ON CAMPUS

STUDENT: Students, per se, are not so aware of themselves, politically, as they ought to be at this time. And I would also say that probably the two years to come, you know, two years from now, there'll probably be more politically aware than they are. You know, this is -- this is college, you know, a lot of different things take up people's time. I mean I can't really fault them for that. It's a matter of political self-awareness, I think, and you can't really fault people for that.

REINHARDT: Tell me briefly what you think college life today is like.

STUDENT: It's a good time. It's a good time. It's better than working, I suppose. There're pressures here, but the pressures are different; the pressures of deadlines, digesting mass quantities of information, trying to make the grade, trying to relax when you have the time. Different people do different things, I'm sure.

In my opinion, I think I think we're preparing for our future.

REINHARDT: People think they're going to get jobs when they finish here?

STUDENT: I think I will. I think everyone. That's why they're here.

[illegible]

SAMPLE OF COURSES OFFERED AT COLLEGE TODAY

HERRON: What are students taking these days? Well, here's a sampling: some of the courses offered at a small college in the western United States.

REINHARDT: Hot air ballooning.

HERRON: Beginning battle and field dir.

REINHARDT: Principals of tourism.

HERRON: Ethnic experiences.

REINHARDT: Famous journeys in literature.

HERRON: Income taxes.

REINHARDT: Fire-fighting tactics.

HERRON: Real estate appraisal.

REINHARDT: We could go on and on.

HERRON: And that's from the catalogue of a small college. Read a university course catalogue sometime.

REINHARDT: That particular college does have certain required courses, and most colleges have general education courses or distribution requirements that limit student choice.

HERRON: There probably aren't many, many colleges or universities which allow students to do their own thing, to pick whatever they want as long as they major in something.

REINHARDT: It does seem as if education is trying, there's a particular urge [illegible] in the direction of skills requirements, also [illegible] of choice, also [illegible] regulation, and so forth.

HERRON: What do you do if a lot of people are not happy? Well, give the system time to [illegible] pretty prestigious. In the Ivy League, the name of the game is to get as many people as you can in the Ivy League [illegible]

REINHARDT: One of our reporters, Tom Looker, talks to Brad Bates [illegible] Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts, who specializes in changing pace.

REINHARDT: Looker reports that in the big 1960s, Amherst introduced its new curriculum, which told freshmen what to take and when to take it.

HERRON: The curriculum consisted of three yearlong courses for freshmen in natural science, social science and the humanities.

REINHARDT: Sophomores had to take an American studies course.

MERROW: Then in the 1960s, Amherst dropped that curriculum in favor of student electives.

REINHARDT: A smorgasbord is what it was.

MERROW: But counter-reaction has set in, and now Amherst, after long study, has adopted another new curriculum, and with it some required courses for freshman.

PROFESSOR: ...All the institutions are there. But Augustus, through these offices and through these powers, was able to keep things firmly under his control.

PROFESSOR HEXTER DESCRIBES CURRICULUM CHANGES AT AMHERST

REINHARDT: We asked Tom to go back to Amherst and talk with several of the professors who helped design the newest curriculum. First, Professor William Hexter, who's been teaching biology at Amherst for twenty-five years.

DR. HEXTER: The old requirement curriculum that you knew went out. We substituted for it a kind of distribution requirement where you had to take so many courses here and so many courses there, but with quite a lot of choice, plus these courses known as problems of inquiry, in which there were three natural sciences, social sciences and humanities. And those courses which excited a lot of the faculty excited very few of the students. And they also came probably at the worst time for curricula. They came at the time of the Vietnam War, of students questioning any kind of authority, of students saying "This is our education; let us choose." And Amherst, like many schools in the mid-seventies, or -- yes, I think it was about the mid-seventies -- no, it was earlier than that -- in the early '70s abolished all requirements. And we were in a position where the only thing that you needed to graduate from Amherst College was to take 32 courses and to have a major.

I think -- I think it was finally decided that, today, it is not possible, probably educationally, and certainly not politically, to institute at this college a curriculum that says there are some things one ought to know. The political argument is that everybody wants a piece of the pie, and how do you -- obviously, you can't have forty required courses; you could only have, you know, four, eight, or something like that. And how do you decide?

Oh, yes, I think many people would agree English should be central. Okay. So you might pick one or two. But then in everybody's eyes is geology more important than biology, or chemistry, etcetera? What really is important is what goes on in the classroom, not the subject, actually, but, if it's well taught, the kind of critical analysis, the way of learning, how to think, I guess is the cliche, is important.

And I agree a hundred percent. And then, of course, everyone in the faculty says "Well, that's exactly what I do with my course. Of course, I am." Well, it just isn't true.

I have a feeling, and I can't prove this in any way, that today a large number of students at Amherst, at least, if not many colleges, really don't want to be here. That is to say, they're not here because they like reading Plato or doing physics problems, or anything. They're here because it is the way, you know, it is -- we are a credentialling agency, and you need the credentials. You can't get into law school if you don't have a BA. And if you have one from Amherst, it's probably better than having one from, you know, State Teacher's College, or something like that. And so that's the tug against the liberal arts is the fact that we are a credentialling agency; the degree is important, and some degrees are more important than others.

And I think the committee, I think all of the faculty worry about this.

REINHARDT: Professor William Hexter of Amherst.

PROFESSOR CRAIG EXTOLS TRADITIONAL REQUIRED CURRICULUM

REINHARDT: Professor Armour Craig of the English Department misses the old required course, known as English I.

DR. CRAIG: Insofar as I have from time to time wished it could be brought back, I was simply expressing a wish that the way that the language in which I conducted my academic affairs was a little more widely shared. I find that I kept talking about a kind of experience that my students just weren't having, obviously, and it's very hard to change your way of talking about things, as we all know. But I know you can't go back.

LOOKER: As a former student in English I, the one aspect of the course that you haven't mentioned is that it really taught an awful lot of people how to write.

DR. CRAIG: Well, you can't beat -- you just cannot beat the requirements, the discipline of producing at least twice a week, or three times a week when you took the course. And it is -- there are many, many bad writers in Amherst College. And they are bad writers because they are not asked to stand and deliver very often. And I think it is too bad. They don't write enough to get familiar with some kind of a shape of a sentence that's their own. I mean it's very important to get a sense of your own style and to get it when you're eighteen, nineteen, twenty years old. And if you don't get it then, it's going to be terribly difficult to get it at all.

REINHARDT: Amherst English Professor Armour reminiscing with Tom Looker.

TOWNSEND NOTES CHANGE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH COLLEAGUES

Tom also talked with Kim Townsend, another of his English professors.

DR. TOWNSEND: English I, the emphasis on writing, was not in order to -- what would the word be? -- to secure the basics. The basics were assumed This was a very sophisticated, luxurious, life-enhancing activity about self and language. One of the things we most often did was to get the perfect paper where the basics were basic and so, "This is a bore. This is

unreadable. Never talk this way again. You are an A-student. You will write perfect business letters. Life will go on perfectly for you, but don't talk to me that way." You see, the tones come back.

LOOKER: I remember my teacher used to write "Swish." And at the end of one paper, he wrote "Where have you" -- I was writing about me and my father, I think. And he wrote at the bottom of the paper, "Where have you seen these people, Mr. Looker? In the funny papers, maybe?" Was this the sort of thing that all the teachers....?

DR. TOWNSEND: Well, that sounds relatively benign, because what he was saying was that you were using language that was appropriate to the funny papers. And shocking though it may have been to you, he really was saying "Surely your relationships with your father were more interesting than that, that you have within you the capacity to think and feel more richly, and you better find some language for it. Otherwise, you're going to go down, to an outside reader at least, as someone with a life of a comic strip character."

There are certain times when I think that there is missing that that you describe, or that I described in the course and do almost anything to bring it back, because it made people so marvelously receptive to language and themselves.

LOOKER: Was it that -- was it that community experience? I mean, I remember sitting around the freshmen dorms, and all the -- all your 300 classmates would be writing on the same topic at the same time, describing a situation, let's say, in which you were sincere and thus and so happened, and what does it mean to be sincere. And this would be one of three papers a week. And you'd say, "Well, what the hell can I write about this?" And I suppose from the teacher's point of view, it was, every three days you'd be sitting down with a bunch of papers and you'd have to read these things.

DR. TOWNSEND: Yeah. I did a 120 papers a week for two years as a beginning teacher. A hundred and twenty papers a week.

There's a good and a bad side to that. It did mean that people had a community experience and they had the bonds of the oppressed. But it smacks initially a little bit too much of boot camp, an esprit de corps because we all had to walk 400 miles in our bare feet. That's not -- that's not terribly attractive.

REINHARDT: Professor Kim Townsend of Amherst College talking with Tom Looker.

MERROW: Next year's Amherst freshmen will take one required course each term, not three as the old curriculum required; their interdisciplinary courses, team-taught.

REINHARDT: This time, though, there's some choice, because there are twelve of these interdisciplinary courses to choose from, courses like "Evaluating the Welfare State," taught by an economist and a sociologist; "In Search of the Land Ethic," taught by professors from the geology, economics and psychology departments, and "People, Money and Human Nature," taught by professors from the history, political science and philosophy departments.

MERROW: Amherst isn't the only place where required courses are coming back into favor. Harvard has gotten a lot of attention lately for its reexamination of the curriculum. But in fact, that institution is something of a Johnny-come-lately in the new move towards what's called a core curriculum and basic requirements.

DEAN CHAPIN DESCRIBES CORE CURRICULUM AT EMORY

REINHARDT: Emory College in Atlanta, Georgia reinstituted requirements this year. Mike Buckl asked the college's Associate Dean, Lloyd Chapin, to describe Emory's new core curriculum.

DEAN CHAPIN: We've identified six areas. The first area we've called "Tools of Learning." And in that area we expect every student to take at least one course in English composition, although even there there are some choices. The student is to do this in the freshman year. And the in each of the remaining three years, the sophomore, junior and senior years, the student is to write at least one major research paper. And that research paper is to be evaluated not only for content, but for grammar, style and documentation. The idea here is to be sure that students learn how to write in a scholarly way, but allow them to do this within a field that is of interest to them, so that, conceivably, a natural science major could fulfill the writing requirement in natural science courses.

Also in the "Tools of Learning" area, we have given students a choice of mastering one of two basic tools, either a foreign language or mathematics.

The second area is called "Natural Science and Mathematics," which I th'nk is self-explanatory, except that we have insisted that every student who takes courses in this area must take at least one course that involves laboratory. And this is because in the past many students were going through the entire four years of college without ever actually gettting into a college laboratory.

The third area is entitled "Historical Perspective of the Western World." And here students are allowed to choose from a range of courses in different departments that are historically oriented. What we wanted to get away from was reinstituting the old requirement of a course in Western Civilization, and, instead, a student can approach the study of history through courses in the History Department or the Philosophy Department, or in the Music Department, or in one of several others.

The fourth area is entitled "Individual and Society," and this is an area in which there's a cluster of courses in the social sciences from which a student may choose -- psychology, political science, sociology, and so on.

The fifth area is entitled "Esthetics and Values." And here a range of courses offered through the Philosophy Department, Religion, the foreign languages, or History and English are available. And the area is intended to develop a student's intellectual skills in handling esthetic and ethical issues.

The sixth area is entitled "Health and Physical Education."

This is simply a holdover from the old requirement, which involved every student taking six quarters of physical education.

BUCKI: In coming up with this curriculum and the six basic areas, was there some faculty in-fighting? "How come only one sociology course is required when that's just as important as history," or, you know, that kind of thing going on.

DEAN CHAPLIN: Well, of course, you've touched on the issue that was of great concern to the faculty, and that is how these enrollments were to be distributed. And one of the things on which we all worked very hard was to come up with a proposal that was not only intellectually sound, but political acceptable. And everyone involved in curricular reform knows how important that latter consideration is. I think we have come up with a program that will insure, in fact, a more even distribution among departments than we have had in recent years. And I believe that every department can be assured of a reasonable degree of student choices.

REINHARDT: Lloyd Chaplin, the Associate Dean of Emory College in Atlanta, Georgia, talking with Mike Bucki of member Station WABE in Atlanta.

MERROW: Defenders of required courses are likely to portray the liberal arts tradition as the last bastion of humane learning. But in fact, campus politics does play a big role in the swing back to required courses.

REINHARDT: Why? Because departments want students to enroll in their courses, and, obviously, required courses guarantee students. And that keeps departments healthy.

MERROW: So much of the debate about core courses is not whether to have a core, but what the core should be.

REINHARDT: If I teach in the Sociology Department, I'm certainly going to fight for a required course in sociology, and so forth.

POPULAR CAMPUS DIVERSIONS

MERROW: But while the faculty members are inside lobbying for required courses, students are likely to be outside concentrating on other aspects of college life.

STUDENT: This is a greased pig contest, and it's being sponsored by each fraternity. And it's just something to bring the campus and the college fraternities and sororities closer together so you don't get the clichéd snobbery that you see so often, you know.

REINHARDT: You mean about fraternities and sororities being stuck up?

STUDENT: Yeah. So it's trying to bring, you know, the college GDIs, you know, closer to the fraternities and sororities.

REINHARDT: Ummm, are the fraternities and sororities sort of separate from the rest of the students here?

STUDENT: They try not to be, but it does -- for the most part, most

of them try not to be. But it does happen, naturally, just because the sororities and fraternities, the Greek way of life scene does have more involvement in certain activities that other people aren't included in.

REINHARDT: Why did you join one?

STUDENT: I'm really far from home. I'm about five and a half, six hours from home, and I really don't go home on weekends, like a lot of people do. They call this one of the suitcase colleges, like most of the state colleges in Pennsylvania. And they provide a lot of things to do. It's hard to provide things to do for the whole campus every weekend, but we always have something to do for ourselves.

REINHARDT: Like -- like what?

STUDENT: Well, like parties, date parties. We've got roller skating and things like that. The way things are modernizing and travel and everything's getting so much better, people are going farther away from home for college. And without that feeling of belonging to a family and stuff, you know, that being-close stuff, you still really need it. There's a lot of pressure up here, and it really helps to know that there's other people backing you as strongly as you get it from a fraternity or a sorority.

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT DEFENDS LIBERAL ARTS TRADITION

NEWMAN: I think the image of a pendulum swinging from A back to B back to A is incorrect. It's more like a zig-zag path, starting here and zigging to the right, but forward, then left, but forward, and then right, but forward, and then left, but forward. But the progress is considerable. And there's no question we're moving in a direction of more a prescribed curriculum, but it's more likely to be a more intelligent, a more carefully thought out answer than the 1950s.

MERROW: Frank Newman, president of the University of Rhode Island, thinks that the tide has turned in favor of the liberal arts tradition, even though at his own university, the courses with the fastest growing enrollments are in job oriented fields like nursing.

REINHARDT: Frank Newman told John that curriculum reformers can't just go back to the requirements of the 1950s.

NEWMAN: I think we should demand more of students, and I think we should demand evidence that they can write, speak, think, handle mathematics, be objective, scholarly, thoughtful and that they can understand our society.

MERROW: It strikes me that what you've said about the kinds of changes coming in curriculum running directly on a collision course with a drive to vocationalize education, to offer students courses that will prepare them for the job market, prepare them for that competition in the job market that you talked about, so that there's a real tension there.

NEWMAN: The drive for vocationalism has really run its course. We have a bad habit in American life of preparing for the last war instead of

the next one. And from the point of view of American higher education, we've been through the peak of interest in vocationalism.

MERROW: How can you say that? The only segment in colleges that's really growing today is junior colleges and community colleges, and that's what they are.

NEWMAN: That's not quite true....

MERROW: Which is not true, that they're the only segment growing, or what they are?

NEWMAN: Yes. As a matter of fact, last year, the liberal arts colleges grew. We have four or five programs in which we can no longer accommodate -- and we've had to put caps on them; can't accommodate new students: nursing, pharmacy, engineering, business, programs like that, whereas history and literature and language, and so on, have been down. That's true. But when one looks around, one finds a slowing of that, in fact a levelling of that and a beginning to turn the corner. Language programs are now up with us. Literature programs are now beginning to turn up. The number of law school applications and medical school applications have begun to drop, dropping now for two years -- medical school applications.

What's happening is that whereas everyone thought three years ago, or five years ago, that we were going to go to -- you know, that we ought to go to entirely a sort of a vocational and career orientation, people have begun to realize that like all of those zigs and zags, you can overdo it; that it's not true that the goal of a college education is to get you your first job and make sure you're out there as a pharmacist or an accountant or an industrial engineer, people are beginning to remember something terribly important, which is our job is not to guarantee you a job because you came to our university. Our job is to guarantee you an education. Your job is to go out with that education and find yourself a job.

Now you may say that's a cop-out. I say it's an irrational thing on our part to ever guarantee you that we're going to worry about you getting a job.

MERROW: What you are saying, though, is that in this zig-zag of ever upward progress, colleges and universities now are going to take more responsibility for the education of the people who pay the money and come to that school, you're going to give less freedom, more control over the kinds of things that students study.

NEWMAN: Yes. And less responsibility for whether or not you get a job.

MERROW: That does seem to me a cop-out. I've always wondered why colleges and universities never felt the responsibility for following their graduates to see what happens to them, to see if the treatment that, in your case, the University of Rhode Island, provided for me, or whoever, made a difference.

NEWMAN: Oh, but that's -- no one -- I'm not arguing that. I think we do have a responsibility to follow our graduates. And as a matter of fact,

at the University of Rhode Island, we do track them. That's not my point. My point is a different one. My point is that our job is to guarantee you a first class education, one that will be useful all your life, one that will encourage you to continue learning, one that will encourage you to continue to grow intellectually and personally. But our job is not to guarantee you that when you get to the end of the line, you're going to have a job waiting for you and you're going to be rich and famous. You'll be rich and famous if, as has always been true in our society, if you're highly motivated and successful. And lots of people who are well educated are not rich and famous. And others who are very -- who may be very narrowly educated turn out to be rich and famous.

The crucial question is whether we build a better society and that people are generally better off not only financially, but in their whole capacity to live in a society like ours.

MERROW: I'm not trying to argue that every college graduate deserves a, quote, "good job," whatever that means. I mean obviously there are a lot of college graduates who probably aren't worth hiring at all. But I'm just wondering about that equation that I think exists in the popular culture that a college education and a college degree somehow should automatically lead to a well-paying white collar job.

NEWMAN: I don't think that they should. And I'll tell you why. I think that they ought to lead to an opportunity. I think that where American society has traditionally had the competition is in the job market, not in the admissions office. I think if you get out of Princeton or Michigan or Long Beach State, you ought to go out and compete for a job. If we tried to restrict the number of college graduates to the number of good jobs that we expected to be out there, then the competition comes at the admissions office, the way it's been in medicine. I think it's a very bad system.

I think the job market ought to be the chooser of the people that are going to rise up in the world.

MERROW: Well, of course, that's to your advantage to make that argument as a university president, because that says "Everybody go to college; everybody go to the university, and then let the job market decide."

NEWMAN: Well, the question is not whether it's to our advantage; it's to whether society's -- it's to society's advantage.

MERROW: There are arguments that it's not to society's advantage to have a, quote, reserve army of the under-employed, in James O'Toole's phrase.

NEWMAN: Yes, though, you know, there are a number of societies that have attempted to match them very carefully. Incidentally, I think Jim is wrong, Jim O'Toole is wrong. He has argued that there's a great deal of dissatisfaction out there, and it's socially dangerous because people are under-employed. First of all, all the demographic predictions lead you to the conclusion that in the 1980s, the imbalance will turn the other way, and that, in fact, there'll be more pressure to go to college because we're going to be essentially short of people with that skill.

But the second thing is I think there's absolutely no evidence to show that the reserve army of the under-employed is any kind of a dangerous social phenomenon. On the contrary, the danger comes when you say to people, such as minority groups or women, and so on, "You can't enter the ball game. We're awfully sorry, but we've decided you're out. And the admissions office has made the decision, and you're out," whether it's older students, women, minorities, and so on.

In my opinion, the most sensible social situation is where we have a reasonable balance, but there's a slight over-supply, modest over-supply. So that if you want to be a lawyer with a prestigious law firm, you must compete for it. No one has ever argued that we have a dangerous reserve army of the under-employed in either professional athletes or actors and actresses, or classical musicians, and yet the competition for those jobs is five times, ten times as bad as it is for jobs in a prestigious law firm.

REINHARDT: Frank Newman, president of the University of Rhode Island and principal author of a study advocating reform in higher education.

FATHER HEALY QUESTIONS EDUCATIONAL VALUES

MERROW: This year the job situation is less grim, especially for those getting bachelors' degrees. The College Placement Council reports that for the second year in a row, there are more job opportunities.

REINHARDT: In business, industry and government, job offers have increased by 31%. The year before, the increase was 49%.

MERROW: The best fields to be getting a degree in this year? Engineering, by a large margin, followed by other scientific disciplines, then business.

REINHARDT: But even the humanities and social sciences reported a slight gain in job offers.

MERROW: Petroleum engineers are being offered the most money, nearly twenty thousand dollars a year.

REINHARDT: Social science majors are being offered the least, just over ten thousand dollars a year.

MERROW: All this talk about money and degrees upsets a lot of college people, including Father Timothy Healy, the president of Georgetown University in Washington, D. C.

FATHER HEALY: To say that a university addresses itself exclusively to the quality of life measured in economic and political terms strikes me as a distortion of the nature of the university. What we have evolved in Western society is a system of collegiate training which really does look to the growth of the young in moral terms, in terms of citizenship, in spiritual terms, as much as it does in intellectual terms. And to say that all of that can be turned immediately into a gainful sort of preparation I think is to fly in the face of all our tradition and monstrously impoverish what we're trying to do in the university and what we're trying to help students do for themselves.

we do not claim, for instance, that everyone who gets out of any respectable liberal arts college is immediately equipped to earn a living. But the liberal arts have never claimed that. And what's very interesting is that, you know, even the professional schools don't do this. It's very interesting that lawyers go through a LL.B. -- I'm sorry, it's now J.D. course and then somebody slaps a bar requirement on them. And as a matter of fact, any lawyer will tell you they're not any good for three or four years after they get out any way. They really have to learn the profession by professing it. And this is true of most professional engagements. It is, by the way, even more true of most nonprofessional kinds of ways of earning a living.

You know, it's a funny, old crotchety story, but there's a deep wisdom in it, the story that the Oxford placement office once got a telegram from India saying "Needed: Director, Bombay Tramway System. Classics Man Preferred." And what the Bombay Tramway System was saying: that we can teach somebody to run, you know, an urban railroad. What we need is someone who can think, who can read, who can talk and who is a little civilized, and who also, by the way, won't bore us all to death when he gets here.

REINHARDT: Father Timothy Healy, president of Georgetown University in Washington, D. C. He was interviewed for OPTIONS IN EDUCATION by Karen Sughrue of member Station WAMU in Washington.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE IN EDUCATION

MERROW: U. S. Commissioner of Education, Dr. Ernest Boyer, would like colleges and universities to adopt a core curriculum that recognizes the universalities of human experience.

REINHARDT: But Boyer doesn't want just required courses in English, history, and so forth. He'd like to put the traditional disciplines aside and try a new approach.

DR. BOYER: Let me give an example in history. Now I think history, as I've already noted, represents an important part of the common experience. But rather than enter it through one narrow door or another, one specialty of English, history or even English literature from the past perhaps, I wonder if we couldn't say what are -- or trying breathlessly to run through all of human history, certainly, or even all of Western civilization, which is sometimes defined as a term. Well, that's a foot race no one can seriously finish. I would suggest that we ask "What would be eight, ten or twelve events that, if studied in depth, would give us great understanding as to how that event changed history or influenced it significantly.

At best, whatever we give in the name of history is going to be very selective and spotty, maybe one-one hundred thousand millionth of everything that's happened. So we just begin with the assumption we can't study everything. What we need to understand is the focus here is a broad experience or an experience that was broad in its impact and affect many lives and probably the course of history significantly. And there are such events. And then by examining them with care we learn something about how our present experience was shaped in the past. And I think that's the road

to enlightenment and what I'd call a liberal learning.

REINHARDT: U. S. Commissioner of Education, Ernest Boyer. Before coming to Washington, Boyer was head of the State University of New York, the largest university system in the country.

PURPOSES AND VALUE OF COLLEGE EDUCATION

MERROW: Robert Goldwin came to Washington from one of the smallest colleges around and one of the most traditional, St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland. That's a so-called "great books" college, where students are required to study the classics; no courses in hot air ballooning, batik or television repair.

REINHARDT: So it shouldn't come as a surprise that Robert Goldwin is a strong defender of the liberal arts tradition.

MERROW: Goldwin came to Washington to be President Ford's education adviser. He's now at the American Enterprise Institute. Barbara talked to him about the purposes of college and its value.

DR. GOLDWIN: The notion that your study must be directly applied to your life career I think is a very narrow and crippling idea, and it distorts education. The purpose of education should be to broaden your view of things and to widen the range of possibilities. I went to an unadulterated liberal arts college, St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland. The "great books" college makes no effort at all to provide a vocation for students. I studied ancient Greek and Latin and four years of theoretical mathematics and read great books from Homer through Freud and Einstein. And no one ever talked to me about a vocation.

Now as a matter of fact, I've made a living from that very education all my life. And other people who went to school with me and had the same curriculum have had successful careers entirely different. One of them is a neurosurgeon. One of them is the managing editor of Time magazine. Some of them are lawyers, psychiatrists. They do a wide variety of things, and none of them had, as undergraduates, vocational training, or at least it wasn't understood as vocational training. And the notion of training people for specific businesses or professions has not -- is not as effective in preparing people for work as sound liberal education, because liberal education, properly understood, is training in the basic, essential skills and concentrating on that in the broadest ways, so that those people have tremendous flexibility in what to do.

The trouble with training for specific things is that you cannot control the job market. And in an era such as ours when things change so fast, you can be trained for something that then becomes obsolete, like the people who make, or used to make slide rules. If you were trained for that, there's no market any more. The electronic calculators have wiped it out completely. Instead of hundreds of thousands of students on campuses all over the country wearing their slide rules in leather cases in their belts, you now have people carrying electronic calculators, and there isn't a slide rule to be seen outside of a museum.

The problems we hear about, the anecdotal accounts of how

hard it is for liberal arts students to find work are based on the stories of problems in their first year or two out of school. If you check on them, and there have been studies doing just this, ten or fifteen years later, they're doing fine. They're almost all, over ninety percent, very satisfied with their work. They're earning at a good level. And about half of them are not working at -- when they're asked, "Does your work relate to your major course of study?," the answer for about half of them is no. But they are as satisfied with their work and are earning as much as those who answer yes to that question.

REINHARDT: I'm wondering, though. Your college education, where you read Freud and Shakespeare and other great authors and writers and thinkers: aren't there some people who simply would not benefit that much from that kind of education?

DR. GOLDWIN: Well, you're probably right. But what follows from that? It's very hard to be successful in any line of work if you can't write well, if you can't analyze a problem, if you don't know anything about logic.

REINHARDT: Do you have to read Shakespeare, though, to learn to write well and communicate and think well?

DR. GOLDWIN: Oh, definitely not. No. But if not that way, then some other way. These fundamental skills, which I call the liberal skills, which can probably be communicated in a variety of ways. I think the best way to learn about formal logic is to read Aristotle. But there are hundreds of textbooks based on Aristotelian logic that are probably more accessible to people who don't have great academic interest and patience for it. But the main point is that there are certain human skills that not only make you competent so that you can serve society, but, pursued a little bit more, have a liberating effect. That's why liberal arts are called "liberal," though it has nothing to do with liberal versus conservative. It means the arts that are appropriate to a free man or woman. They liberate you from ignorance, from superstition, from all the things that hold people down who lack education.

Colleges don't have to change their curriculum to help or assure jobs for their students.

REINHARDT: Why do you think they did? Were they really trying to compete with each other for the students?

DR. GOLDWIN: Well, you know how little children frighten each other by telling -- hearing stories and then repeating them until they're all in a panic. And you know how rumor spreads. Certain ideas just get going among young people. And I must say the pressure is even worse from their parents. That notion that you have to have some clearly specific vocational training in order to get a job has spread until it's accepted as dogma when it isn't true.

MERROW: Dr. Robert Goldwin of the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D. C.

CONFLICT BETWEEN PRACTICAL AND LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

REINHARDT: We began by saying that there's a battle going on between

students who want practical courses that will lead to jobs, or maybe to graduate school, and defenders of the liberal arts tradition, who argue that a classical education is the best training for a life of critical thinking and of change.

MERROW: Who's winning? That's hard to say, although I suspect that those who favor vocational training are in the lead.

REINHARDT: A lot of students who do decide to go to college are choosing the job oriented curriculum.

MERROW: But don't give up on the liberal arts. As we've heard, they're making a comeback.

A FRESHMAN'S PERSPECTIVE OF COLLEGE

STUDENT: College today I don't think is all that different from what it's ever been. People still do the same things that they always used to. I've learned a lot. I've grown up a lot. And I really like it. I think I would speak very highly of the school academically and socially, because, well, I have interest in academics because my dad's a school principal and my mom's a teacher, and that's important. But it's a good education and it's not awful hard, and the name doesn't scare you like, you know, Yale -- haaaa. It's -- you know, you work, but yet there's ample opportunity for everyone. I found just the kind of people I wanted to find in a very short time.

* * *

REINHARDT: You know, John, more young men are choosing not to go to college at all these days, but young women are going in increasing numbers. Women are in a majority now for the first time.

MERROW: I think you've brought us, skillfully and very subtly, to the subject of next week's OPTIONS IN EDUCATION.

REINHARDT: No harm in that.

MERROW: Right. Next week: "The Women's Colleges." Some of them let men in. And how is that working out?

REINHARDT: And others remain true to their tradition: women only.

MERROW: That's next week on Part II of this four part series on "Colleges Today."

* * *

REINHARDT: For transcripts of the four part series, send two dollars to National Public Radio -- Education, Washington, D. C., 20036.

MERROW: You can buy the cassette of just this program for five dollars. If you want all four cassettes, twenty dollars.

REINHARDT: We'll give the address again in a minute.

MERROW: Part III of this series will be a combination obituary and autopsy of two colleges that are dying; that is, going out of business.

REINHARDT: And Part IV, a close look at what other colleges are doing to try to stay healthy. They call it "lifelong learning," or "recurrent education." In other words, attract old folks.

MERROW: So for the four transcripts, send two dollars to National Public Radio -- Education, Washington, D. C., 20036. Individual cassettes are five dollars each.

REINHARDT: And you can have our schedule for the next three months, free for the asking.

MERROW: When you write, ask for programs 118 through 121, "Colleges Today." And please tell us the call letters of your local NPR station.

REINHARDT: Material for this program came, in part, from Karen Sughrue of member Station WAMU in Washington, D. C., Mike Bucki, Station WABE, Atlanta, Georgia, and Tom Looker in Amherst, Massachusetts.

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I'm Barbara Reinhardt.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow, and this is NPR, National Public Radio.

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